

19th CONGRESS,
2d Session.

[Doc. No. 37.]

HO. OF REPS.

MEMORIAL

OF SUNDRY

MERCHANTS OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

UPON THE SUBJECT OF

Spoliations

COMMITTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OR DECREES

OF THE

GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE.

JANUARY 8, 1827.

Read and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY GALES & SEATON

1827.

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MEMORIAL.

*To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the
United States in Congress assembled.*

The memorial of the undersigned, merchants of the city of Philadelphia respectfully sheweth:

That, in conformity to a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed the last session of Congress, they have furnished the Department of State with statements of their claims upon the Government of France for spoliations and losses sustained under its authority or various decrees, with the hope and expectation that the information therein contained would form the basis of some new measure leading to the great object of indemnity, so long and so unjustly withheld. That, refraining from a painful repetition and enumeration of the sufferings and grievances referred to, which falling, in the first instance, on your memorialists, have, in their consequences and effects, reached even the agricultural and manufacturing sources of prosperity of this Union, they venture respectfully to suggest to your Honorable Bodies the adoption of an expedient, which, under analogous circumstances, has been resorted to with success on several former occasions. They refer to the institution of a special mission to France, which, according with the mild and pacific, yet firm and dignified character and policy of this Government, has heretofore been productive of the happiest results in adjusting similar demands on some of the principal Powers of Europe.

Such a mission, your memorialists conceive, could not fail, from its respectful and special character, to ensure the most favorable reception and immediate attention from the French Government, which, having recognized and paid the claims of their European neighbors, and even those of Algiers, for similar violations of the law of nations during the dynasty of Napoleon, could not, consistently, even with the ordinary rules of comity and civility, reject an amicable and special overture for a renewed negotiation, and investigation of their claims.

Were additional arguments wanting to prove the sound policy of such an attempt, they might be found in the recent success of our pre-

sent able Minister at the Court of London, who, it is understood, has effected an arrangement with the British Government on a long contested and unadjusted claim under the Treaty of Ghent.

Discarding all partial and selfish views of the subject, your memorialists are deeply impressed with the important truth, that the prosperity and interests of the commerce of the United States, are indissolubly connected and closely interwoven with those of other great branches of national industry, more especially with agriculture and manufactures, and that every loss sustained by the merchant, by impairing and lessening the active capital of the country, necessarily affects both the farmer and artisan, and has a tendency to diminish the value of the soil, as well as its produce, while at the same time it injures the public revenue, and thereby saps the very strength of the naval and military power of the country. Even the factories, which consume our wool, our cotton, and other raw materials; the canals and turnpikes which intersect our country, and conduct its produce to the seaports, are the offspring of commercial capital and enterprise. And your memorialists respectfully and fervently pray that the hand of a beneficent Government may be extended by means of a special mission, or otherwise, to preserve the great amount of property which is now unjustly withheld by France, in violation of the faith of treaties, and of the acknowledged law of nations.

Philadelphia, December 30, 1826.